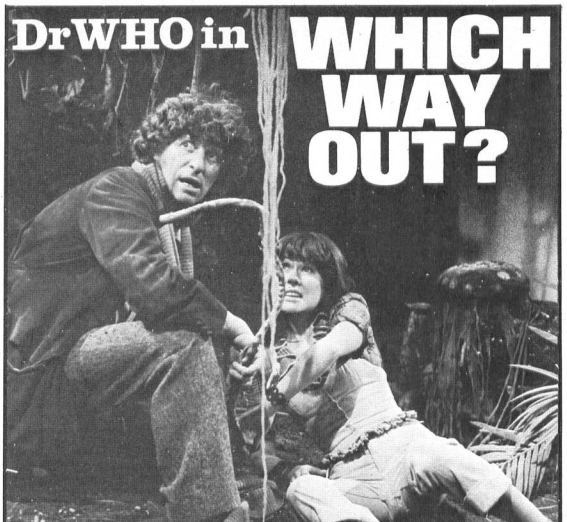
Dr WHO in WHICH WAY OUT?



His unruly locks flapping in a steady wind, the Doctor searched the bleak landscape for the slightest evidence of movement.

"Not exactly the perfect holiday spot, is it?" commented Sarah-Jane Smith joining him.

"As I see it," answered the Doctor, "Sarto has but two virtues."

"Which are?"

"The atmosphere is breathable and the planet is uninhabited," supplied the Doctor.

"So why have the Time Lords sent us here?"

"Your guess is as good as mine!" stated her companion, launching himself away from the Tardis. "One thing's for certain, they won't allow us to leave until we've tracked it down."

Progress was not easy. Beneath their feet lay a never-ending field of loose rocks, lichen and tangling creeper.

"Is any of this stuff edible?" puffed Sarah-Jane, having more than a job to keep up with the Doctor.

"Only the most primitive of animal life, as you know it, could exist on such vegetation," he informed her. "But then you've accompanied me on enough missions to know that not all forms follow the human dependence on such matter. Even so, that makes you right about one thing."

"Which is?"

"It limits the area of speculation," said the Doctor profoundly. Then a sudden, muffled yell told the Doctor that he was talking to himself; Sarah-Jane had vanished from sight.

The girl's unexpected descent had terminated in a bone-jarring thud. For quite some moments she could merely lie where she had landed and await the return of breath to her complaining body. Finding his way down the narrow shaft, the Doctor joined her.

"Nothing broken, I hope?" he enquired.

"No, I don't think so," came the shaken reply. "What a stupid place to put a hole," she argued, somewhat illogically.

"Mmmm..." murmured the Doctor, his interest taken by the darkened cavern that led off the vertical shaft. "Can you hear anything?" he asked her.

"Only the wind above and my bones complaining!" Sarah-Jane snapped, a little annoyed that the Doctor should forget her mishap so readily.

"Come over here and listen," he ordered, already having entered the shadows of the tunnel himself.

She obeyed and strained her ears, eager to detect what had obviously attracted him. Very faintly, from somewhere that seemed far, far below, a repeated clanking noise could be heard, together with a rumble of distant thunder.

"I suppose it could have some natural explanation, but it does sound a bit mechanical," breathed Sarah-Jane, forgetting her bruises.

"Just what I was thinking myself," agreed the Doctor, venturing deeper into the tunnel. Whatever it is, must be arrived at via this entrance — come on!"

Sarah-Jane sighed. The prospect was far from attractive, but she knew the Doctor of old. It was no good protesting when his curiosity was aroused.

VAST CAVERN

The way was not easy. The cave twisted and turned into pitch blackness. Fumbling forward like blind people, the two explorers discovered the walls narrowed to little more than a slit. Equally frustrating, the roof forced them to crawl on their hands and knees. The girl found herself fighting rising panic from the enclosed atmosphere. Only the Doctor's whispered encouragement kept her going. With some relief, she now realised that she could make out the Doctor's silhouette ahead. Their access had widened and it was getting light.

They emerged on to a rocky ledge and inched their way forward. Peering over the edge, a remarkable sight met their stares. About twenty metres below, lay the answer to the mysterious sound. Straddled across swiftly-moving current was a collection of buildings. The ringing, bell-like sound came from an undefined area just above the swirling water.

Light flooded from the buildings, illuminating the vast cavern that was of cathedral proportions. The distant thunder echoed back at them from an immense arching tunnel, beneath which the water rushed out of view.

"A subterranean Niagara," suggested the Doctor.

"Is that a hydro-electric plant, then?"

"I can't think of a better explanation," responded the Doctor. "But who is it that hides in the belly of an uninhabited planet?"

"And requires massive amounts of generating power?" finished the girl.

"Exactly!" The Doctor stared about him. "To discover that, we need to find a path down to those buildings — and that isn't going to be easy."

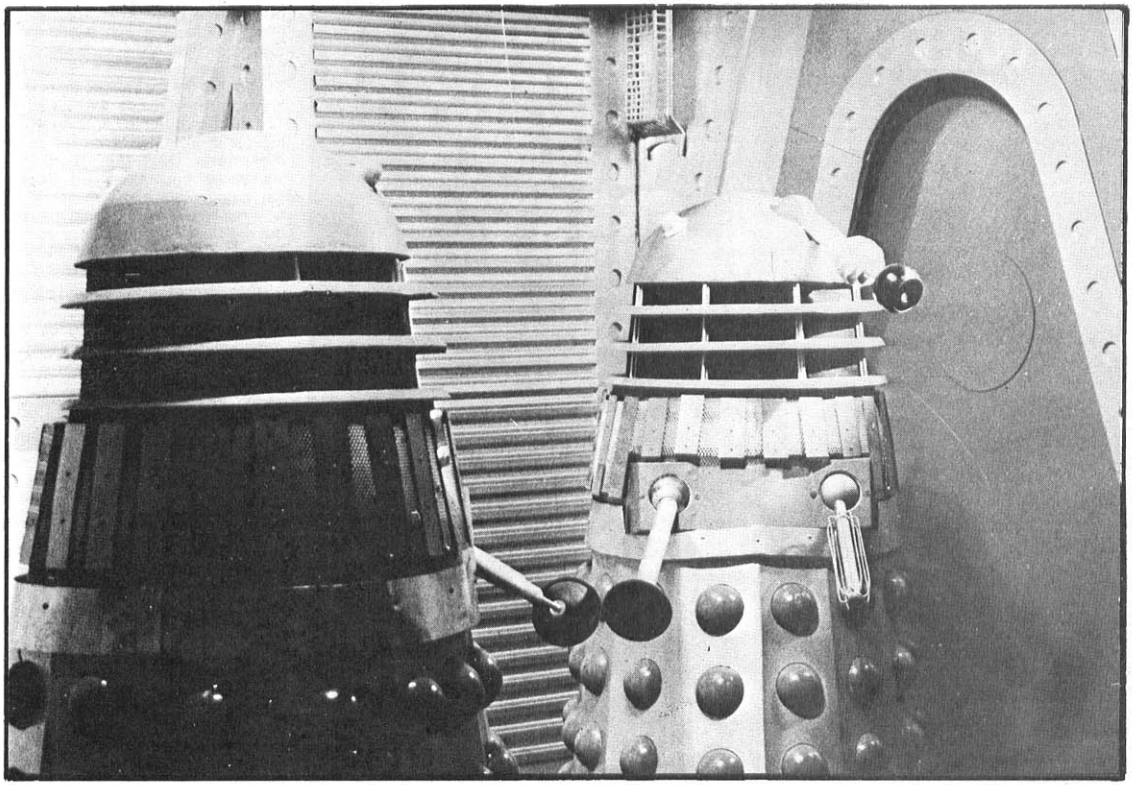
One side of the ledge on which they stood finished in a sheer drop. The other way offered a gentle descent away from the plant, to follow the river's path beneath the arch.

"It's suicide whichever way we choose," argued Sarah-Jane. "Straight down this side and an impossible current the other."

"Not quite!" The Doctor pointed across the precipitous drop to a small outcrop. "If we can make that, there's a route down the other side."

Before Sarah-Jane could argue, he had leapt the spanning metres and had made his landing amid a shower of loosened debris. With relief, she saw him strengthen his precarious anchorage and climb to safety. This moment of comfort quickly dissolved when she realised that she was now compelled to follow.

"Wait!" called the Doctor, unravelling the muffler from around his neck. "Grab this!" he ordered as it came looping toward her. "Tie it round your middle!" He reached out across the yawning



abyss as the only way of retaining a grip on the other end. Drawing a deep breath, Sarah-Jane took off. In a split second, the uncooperative rock face came to meet her. Fear overtook all reason as everything broke away from beneath her clawing hands. She was slipping and couldn't hold on. Then a painful tug around her waist told her that the Doctor's improvised life-line was still intact. Gasping with effort and her devastated nerves, Sarah-Jane joined her friend.

"Get your breath back," he said, wrapping the scarf around his neck, "and we'll pay our friends a call."

"Doesn't it bother you that there might not be another way out?" panted Sarah-Jane.

"First things first!" replied the Doctor calmly. "We can worry about that when we've found what the Time Lords have put us up against."

RED COMMANDER

They entered the humming plant via a convenient gap around some over-sized plumbing.

"Do you recognise the style of the acrhitecture yet, Doctor?" asked Sarah-Jane.

"Only too well, dear girl."

What the time-traveller was then going to add remained unsaid as an ominously strident, metallic voice broke in.

"STAND WHERE YOU ARE!"

"Daleks!" gasped Sarah-Jane.

"I'm afraid so," sighed the Doctor.

"THE PRISONERS WILL REMAIN SILENT! YOU WILL OBEY THE DALEKS!"

Seconds later, they were marching through an unbelievable world of Dalek industry. Wherever the eye rested, the sinister pepper-pot shapes were engaged at a never-ceasing assembly line.

"What are they manufacturing?" whispered Sarah-Jane from the corner of her mouth.

"Another invasion fleet, another armoury of death and destruction," commented the Doctor in similar fashion.

Their journey through the Dalek factory ended in a small, soundless chamber without windows and only the sealed, automatic doors by which they had entered.

The Doctor was already fingering his way around the walls for some inspiration to escape, when the doors slid open to expose a remarkable sight. The Dalek that stood framed before them was a gleaming scarlet.

"The latest Dalek 'napoleon', I presume?" taunted the Doctor.

"YOU WILL NOT ADDRESS THE RED COMMANDER UNTIL SPOKEN TO!" came the

humourless reply. "YOU ARE THE ONE KNOWN AS THE DOCTOR, ARCH ENEMY OF THE DALEKS?"

"I have that pleasure," sneered the Doctor.

"YOU HAVE BEEN A THREAT OF THE DALEKS BEFORE — BUT NOT AGAIN! THE RED COMMANDER WILL NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF HIS PREDECESSORS!"

"Oh, really?"

"I WILL NOT WASTE TIME TRYING TO EXTRACT YOUR INCREDIBLE KNOWLEDGE," announced the Red Commander. "I WILL EXTERMINATE YOU TO PROVE THAT THE LEADER OF THE DALEKS HAS NO NEED OF YOUR PUNY MIND!"

"It's certainly the most intelligent decision I've ever heard a Dalek make," nodded the Doctor.

"Doctor!" protested Sarah-Jane, certain that he was provoking the Red Commander a little too much.

"Credit where credit's due," the Doctor insisted. "How long do we have to wait before our merciful conclusion?"

"IN FIFTY DALEK MINUTES!"

The Dalek pirouetted around; the doors sliding noiselessly open at his hidden signal. "YOU WILL BE EXTERMINATED AS ENTERTAINMENT TO DALEK WORKFORCE!"

Then he was gone.

"Shouldn't you have played for more time?" asked the girl once they were alone again.

"I didn't think it was necessary," said the Doctor, extracting a small penknife from his waistcoat pocket. With this, he began prodding the door frame.

"Aha!" he exclaimed triumphantly, after several minutes successful excavation. Sarah-Jane saw that he had pulled clear a single wire.

"What's that?" she queried as she saw him cut it in half and bare the ends.

"It should be the power to the door mechanism."

"Can you open the door then?"

"No. But I'm pretty certain I can close it," was the exasperating reply.

"Don't talk in riddles, Doctor!" she exploded.

He patted her gently on the shoulder.

"Just keep your cool and trust me."

GRIM JOURNEY

Not long after, the door slid open once more, and a single Dalek made to enter. The Doctor was holding the ends of the cable together and as soon as his hands parted the doors closed holding the Dalek firmly captive.

"EMERG . . .!" the Dalek's bleat got no further. The Doctor had applied the bared ends to the metal casing. A ghastly gurgle emitted from within as blue electric sparks and a smell of burning filled the tiny chamber. Without more ado, the Doctor promptly rejoined the cable and the door re-opened, allowing them through.

"Why didn't it electrocute you when you severed it?" questioned Sarah-Jane.

"Because the circuit mechanism was totally inactive when the doors were fully closed." He hurried down the empty corridor dragging her by the hand. "No time for silly quizzes, we have to get ourselves out of sight before our escape is discovered."

A lethal game of cat and mouse began with an eerie, wailing signal that the Doctor identified as the Dalek alarm system. Soon the entire place seemed to be teeming with chanting pepper-pots.

"SEEK AND EXTERMINATE! SEEK AND EXTERMINATE!"

The Time Lord and the girl found themselves hiding in a series of torpedo like shapes, stacked in piles of ten.

"They look like missiles," said Sarah-Jane.

"They're just the casings," responded the Doctor, stripping off a side to show the empty interior. He left this to peer down at the rushing water that could be seen through a grating at his feet. The Doctor's eye took on a sudden familiar gleam. "I can't guarantee it, of course," he told her, "but I think I've just solved our way out."

"Can we go then?" she asked eagerly.

"After I've adjusted their central computer system," replied the Doctor. "Clamber into one of those casings and wait for my return."

With this he was gone.

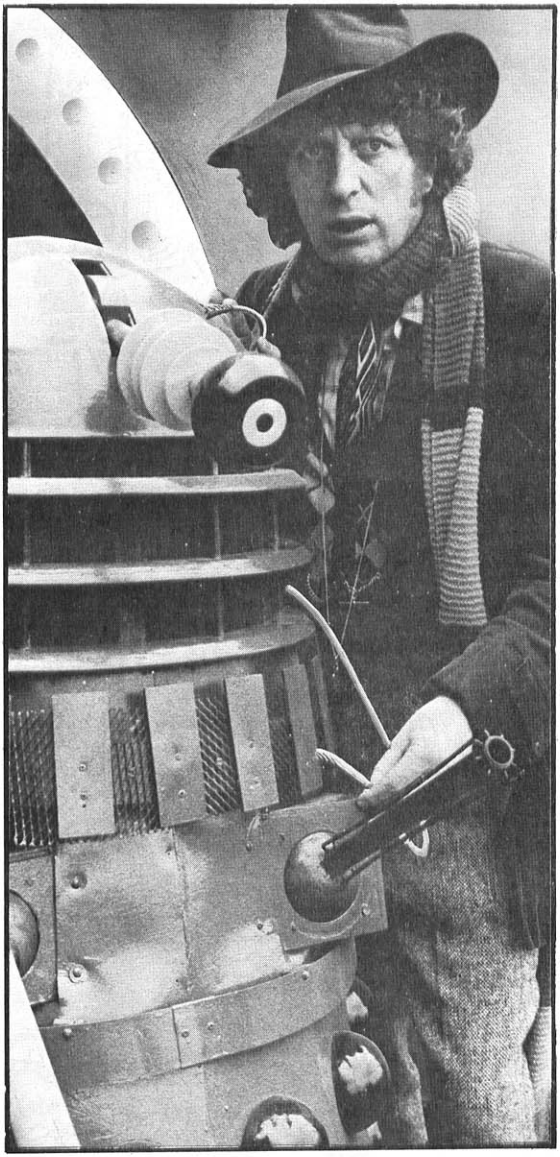
Endless seconds passed; Sarah-Jane was certain her pounding heart would expose her to the searching Daleks. But then a much louder commotion drove such silly fancies aside. A sort of fizzing noise followed by a series of dull explosions told her the Doctor was on his way back, with the Daleks in pursuit.

Breathlessly, he staggered into the field of empty missiles and she made to leave her haven and join him. The Doctor pushed her back and began rolling it toward a sheer edge that dropped into the river. When it was teetering on the brink, he jammed his own bulk in beside her and pulled the hatch closed. At the very same moment, a searing heat hit the metal shell and pushed it over the ledge. A muffled chorus of "EXTERMINATE!" became drowned in the roaring current.

Then they were spiralling and cavorting in a ghastly dance of survival as the missile casing hurtled forward.

"We'll be bashed to pulp even if it does flow back to the surface again!" screamed Sarah-Jane in terror.

"Have faith," shouted the Doctor grimly, "several stalwarts survived a plunge over Niagara!



There's an outside chance for us!"

Then, with a sensation that they were in free flight, violence returned with the force of their makeshift boat hitting water again. The new turbulence was too much for Sarah-Jane's senses. Black oblivion took the nightmare away.

CRIMSON BLAST

"Where am I?" she mumbled, holding her throbbing head.

"Back on the surface," smiled the Doctor, helping her to her feet. She gazed with disbelief at the battered, dented tube that made it all possible.

"I don't think I want another trip like that!" she said emphatically.

"Forget about it," ordered the Doctor. "Any minute now, we should see if my rewiring of the Dalek control circuit has paid dividends."

The ground suddenly trembled beneath their feet, like an earthquake, and the sky turned crimson-orange.

"If that hasn't seen the end of those monsters, I'd be greatly surprised," expressed Sarah-Jane in awe.

"Oh, I wouldn't count on that, dear girl," the Doctor wasn't so easily convinced. "They have a remarkable way of reappearing. Come on, let's go and find the Tardis."

It was high time to leave this bomb-shattered plant.